

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

ATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO, GOVERNOR



RICHARD L. STALDER, SECRETARY

November 14, 2005

To our Corrections Family:

Thank you all for your assistance, support, and prayers in the days and months following the passage of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita through Louisiana. We have a long way to go to rebuild and recover. Buildings and systems have been devastated. We lost lives, homes, entire communities. We continue to grieve over lost memories and dreams.

With your support, however, we have realized as never before that we are not alone in confronting these challenges. Your monetary donations provided practical comfort to employees displaced by the hurricanes. Your donations of food, water, clothing and other essential items helped sustain security and shelter operations for employees and for evacuees who left their homes with little or nothing. Your offers of staff assistance helped overburdened correctional officers, medical personnel, and others deal with a greatly increased inmate population and with personal stresses linked to experiencing two catastrophic events in a short period of time. In answering our calls for help, you also helped restore our spirit and renew our hopes. Your generosity has mitigated the challenge as our employees and their families begin to rebuild their lives. As a result of your kindness, we have been able to reach beyond our own needs into surrounding communities that shared the hurricanes' brunt.

The hurricanes left pride as well as devastation in their wake. The most dramatic event was the evacuation by boat, then bus of almost 6,000 inmates from the already flooded Orleans Parish Prison complex. We did so in slightly less than 72 hours and without escape or serious injury. By the end of the four-week period defined by the two hurricanes, we had successfully relocated 10,560 local, state, and federal inmates from threatened areas to safety in state and local jail facilities in Louisiana and a federal facility in Florida. Every one of the Department's 6,425 employees contributed in some way to the massive effort to evacuate, identify, classify, and secure the displaced inmates. All across the devastated regions of the state, employees stood their posts and honored their professional commitments, while at the same time uncertain of the status of their own homes and the safety of their loved ones.

These and hundreds of other quietly heroic actions took place against the backdrop of your generous support. You were there as corrections professionals to help corrections professionals.

I hope that no other agency will experience what we along the Gulf Coast have experienced and continue to deal with. Understand, however, that if you do, you will have the full support of this and so many other correctional agencies. In Corrections, it appears, we are never alone. This Department could not be more grateful for that fact.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stalder", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Richard L. Stalder
Secretary